

Golden Plow Award Acceptance Speech

By Congressman Jerry Moran

February 2, 2005

Thank you for that warm ovation. It is truly an honor for me to be here tonight and accept Farm Bureau's Golden Plow award on behalf of farmers in Kansas and across the country. I am also honored to accept this award in the presence of my wife, Robba, whose patience and tolerance with her Congressman are unending. It's her support that allows me to stand before you tonight. I would also like to acknowledge two members of my staff who care so much about the folks of Kansas—a farm boy from Quinter, Daron Jamison, and a farm boy from Abilene, Trevor McKeeman.

Kansas's strength has always come from our land and the productivity of our family farms. This award means so much coming from an organization that is the voice for farmers at all levels—big and small and for all commodities, from specialty crops to livestock. To me, Farm Bureau symbolizes the very “Golden Plow” that you are presenting to me tonight.

As a farm-state Congressman, I often find myself educating my colleagues and other officials in Washington, DC about the critical importance of strong agriculture policy—not just here domestically, but around the globe. I've been committed to seeking opportunities and fair treatment for our farmers. With an ever more urban Congress and the complexities of a world ag economy, this is often not an easy task. But to keep the family farm alive, it is worth every bit of effort. The family farm contributes enormously to the strength and stability of our rural economies and in towns from coast to coast; consumers enjoy a safe and affordable food

supply due to the efficiency and performance of America's family farmers.

It was Daniel Webster who wrote, "When tillage begins, other arts follow. The Farmers therefore are the founders of human civilization." This quote is engraved in the Capitol and is a constant reminder for me as to why I do what I do. Having a successful agriculture sector is so vitally important not only for us here tonight, but for our state and nation.

But in addition to being the economic backbone of so many of the towns you and I come from, agriculture is also our link to the past, to times when family was the axis around which all things revolved. In today's fast-paced, interconnected world, there are few industries where sons and daughters can work side-by-side with moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas. But we still find that today in agriculture. The way of life that we lead and that we celebrate here tonight represents something different than what they have in the cities. It's a celebration of what too many in our country have forgotten—an endangered way of life that we must work each and every day to preserve.

This is hope. While water and soil are important resources, our two most important assets are our quality of life and our children and only by discovering innovative ways that our farms can be profitable, can we keep our next generation on the farm and preserve our communities. It's a difficult task, but it can be done, which is what makes the work that Farm Bureau does, so important.

I look forward to working with you and your leadership toward that goal. Bob Stallman's effort in unifying America's farmers and ranchers with one voice in Washington, DC is exceptional. He works extremely hard and is very highly respected and trusted by those of us in Congress. Thanks for being here tonight Bob. Welcome back to Kansas.

Our own Steve Baccus has been a friend of mine since before I came to Congress. He's been an exceptional spokesman for Kansas agriculture and has made our state stand out proudly as the breadbasket of the world. I want to thank him for his support and for giving so much of his time and energy to fight for Kansas farmers and ranchers.

We all know being successful in farming and ranching isn't determined by one or two years of good crops or cattle prices. It's about using the good years to overcome the

bad in order to maintain a way of life.
consistency over the long run to be successful.

It takes

This Golden Plow makes me think of a plowing analogy.

Like plowing a field, defending and promoting agriculture is a long process and takes a lot of fuel.

You glide through the easy spots and struggle through the tough ones.

But in the end, you've turned over a new beginning for next year's crop.

This is what I set out to do when I came to Congress—to be consistent in all my efforts to make life better for the American farmer and give the next generation a chance to grow.

Thank you again for acknowledging my efforts with the Golden Plow award. I have many, close, personal friends in this room, and I am grateful for your giving me the opportunity to work for you in our nation's capital. May God watch over our farmers and the land they love.